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General Assembly

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6 July 2001
English
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Fifty-sixth session

Request for the inclusion of an item in the provisional agenda of the fifty-sixth session

Observance of the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict

Letter dated 27 June 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to request the inclusion in the agenda of the General Assembly of an item entitled "Observance of the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict" in accordance with rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

My country's delegation would like this item to be included in the provisional agenda of the fifty-sixth regular session of the General Assembly and to be allocated to plenary meetings. In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum is attached (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Mohammad A. **Abulhasan**
Permanent Representative

01-44508 (E) 090701

Annex

Explanatory memorandum

The State of Kuwait attaches special importance to the protection of the environment and to ensuring that it is not exploited in time of war. This is based on Kuwait's genuine desire for the implementation of the undertaking given by our leaders at the Millennium Summit to respect nature in the interest of our future welfare and that of our descendants and to act together to protect our common environment.

In requesting the inclusion of this item, Kuwait recalls a vivid experience that it went through some years past, when our region witnessed military conflict and war whose dire consequences had adverse repercussions on its environment.

Accordingly, it is our responsibility as States and Governments to take action to prevent the exploitation of the environment in war and military conflict in order to protect our patrimony and our common destiny in this life. We must also do so in implementation of the various international conventions and instruments in this field and especially of the provisions of article 35 of Protocol I Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949. Kuwait hopes that the discussions on this item in the General Assembly will result in agreement to proclaim 6 November each year as the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict.

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Request for the inclusion of an item in the provisional agenda of the fifty-sixth session

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum

Note by the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 22 May 2001 from Teburoro Tito, President of Kiribati, requesting the inclusion in the provisional agenda of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, in accordance with rules 13 and 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, of an item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum".

01-44448 (E) 090701

Annex

Letter dated 22 May 2001 from the President of Kiribati to the Secretary-General

Since the establishment of the Pacific Islands Forum (formerly the South Pacific Forum) in 1972, the Heads of State or Government of the member countries have collectively shown their resolve to pursue regional integration, stability and prosperity for their respective peoples.

The Pacific has been long renowned in history as a region of peace, tolerance and cultural and traditional diversity. Respect for the rule of law and democratic principles have been enshrined in the region. However, this pacific doctrine is facing real challenges as island nations try to balance colonial forms of governance, globalization and the rights of traditional resource owners. Recent events in Fiji, Solomon Islands and on the island of Bougainville in Papua New Guinea are the result of serious dramatic changes and the complexity of conflict prevention and peace-building. It is acknowledged that the root causes of these problems are complex.

At the twenty-fifth South Pacific Forum, held in Brisbane, Forum leaders acknowledged the importance of broadening its exchange of information and consultation with the United Nations Secretariat in New York and approved the Forum's applying for observer status with the United Nations General Assembly. In Rarotonga, Cook Islands, the leaders again expressed appreciation for the contribution to the region of the work of the United Nations in the areas of development and the environment, and emphasized the need for a strengthened United Nations Organization, responsive to the needs of smaller countries.

In 1995 Forum leaders adopted a Vision Statement and the Forum Economic Action Plan Eight Principles of Good Governance and, in 1997, in the Cook Islands, the Aitutaki Declaration on Regional Security Cooperation.

Recently, in October 2000, Forum leaders, while respecting the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other member countries, committed themselves and their countries to a number of guiding principles and courses of action called the Biketawa Declaration,[1] which mandates the Secretary-General of the Forum to initiate action in relation to a crisis in one of the member countries. Dealing with complex causes of conflict and tension is a daunting challenge which requires a significant amount of resources. The Forum countries stretch across half the world.

These are significant developments reflecting the changing policies of Forum member countries, a greater willingness to undertake a collective discharge of duties, and confidence in the rule of law and good governance. The Forum member countries have also endorsed the Millennium Summit outcomes and the General Assembly's Declaration on a Culture of Peace.

Forum member countries, most of them small island States, are committed to the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States adopted in Barbados in 1994, following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held at Rio, Brazil, in 1992. The region strives to implement strategies for sustained economic growth that protects

[1] Adopted at the thirty-first Pacific Islands Forum in Kiribati.

the environment and enhances the capacity for greater productivity. Given their limited size and markets, Forum island countries are heavily dependent on imports and are making every effort to mitigate the adverse impacts of trade liberalization, climate change and sea level rise. Development assistance, both bilateral and multilateral, continues to be an important source of national revenue for many of these States, and their fisheries and marine resources are among the largest in the world. In this regard, Forum countries are deeply committed to their international agreements on matters related to the sea and ocean.

The issues before the United Nations have serious implications for the region and individual countries. Recently the United Nations embraced five of our members, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Tonga and Tuvalu, as new members of the Organization, and we are grateful for the support of the international community. Forum member countries value the relationship with the United Nations and have played their part in promoting the objectives enshrined in the Charter of the Organization.

While some of our members are relatively new to the United Nations family, others such as Australia, New Zealand and Fiji have been strong contributors of United Nations peacekeeping forces serving in the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Africa. Recently the Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum, Noël Levi, CBE, attended the fourth high-level meeting between the United Nations and regional organizations. This initiative of yours is timely for regional security cooperation between our two institutions in the area of preventive diplomacy, conflict resolution and peace-building.

On behalf of the Forum member countries[2] I have the honour to request, in the spirit of wider international cooperation and friendship, the inclusion in the provisional agenda of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly of an item entitled: "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum".

This item would facilitate plans to integrate multi-sectoral cooperation between the United Nations and build upon experience that the United Nations has with other cooperative arrangements with regional organizations. The Forum island countries are committed to establishing this partnership in the interest of global peace and prosperity for all peoples. Such an institutional framework would reaffirm that the steps taken by the Forum countries will be enriched by the support of the international community, and serve as a landmark towards better coordination and cooperation for our region.

This arrangement would strengthen our relations, provide an avenue for the General Assembly to identify areas for mutual support and cooperation with a view to building lasting solutions for peace and development for Pacific Islands Forum countries and the region as a whole.

(*Signed*) Teburoro **Tito**
President
Republic of Kiribati

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[2] Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu, Tonga, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

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Fifty-sixth session

Request for the inclusion of an item in the provisional agenda of the fifty-sixth session

Observer status for the International Hydrographic Organization in the General Assembly

Letter dated 2 July 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Monaco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with rule 13 e of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and by order of the Government of the Principality, I have the honour to request the inclusion in the provisional agenda of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly of an item entitled, "Observer status for the International Hydrographic Organization in the General Assembly".

Pursuant to rule 20 of the said rules of procedure, an explanatory memorandum in support of the above request and a draft resolution are attached (see annexes).

(*Signed*) Jacques **Boisson**

01-44454 (E) 100701 100701

Annex I

Explanatory memorandum

Establishment

The International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) is a consultative and technical intergovernmental organization established by a convention done at Monaco on 3 May 1967. Pursuant to Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations, the Convention was registered with the United Nations Secretariat on 22 September 1970. IHO has 69 member States from every region. It has no authority over the national hydrographic offices of the Governments parties to the Convention.

Following the conferences held in St. Petersburg in 1908 and 1912, 24 States met in London in 1919 for a hydrographic conference during which it was decided that a permanent body should be established. At the invitation of Prince Albert I of Monaco, a noted marine scientist, the International Hydrographic Bureau was provided with premises, and it began work in 1921 with a view to making navigation easier and safer throughout the world by improving nautical charts and documents.

The 1970 Convention results from the desire of the participating Governments to pursue on an intergovernmental basis their cooperation in hydrography.

Work of the International Hydrographic Organization

The International Hydrographic Organization has the following functions:

- The coordination of the activities of national hydrographic offices;
- The greatest possible uniformity in nautical charts and documents;
- The adoption of reliable and efficient methods of carrying out and using hydrographic surveys;
- The development of the sciences in the field of hydrography and the techniques employed in descriptive oceanography.

To this end, the Organization has two principal bodies:

The International Hydrographic Conference and the International Hydrographic Bureau, administered by the Directing Committee.

The International Hydrographic Conference is composed of representatives of the Governments of member States. It meets in ordinary session every five years.

It main objectives are:

- To give general directives on the functioning and work of the Organization;
- To elect the members of the Directing Committee and its President;
- To examine reports submitted to it by the Bureau;
- To make decisions on all technical or administrative proposals submitted by member Governments or the Bureau;
- To approve the budget.

The International Hydrographic Bureau is responsible for carrying out the tasks assigned to it by the Convention or the Conference. It comprises the Directing Committee, which is made up of three members elected for five years, including the President as representative of the Organization, and of technical and administrative personnel.

It is the responsibility of the Bureau in particular:

- To bring about a close and permanent association between national hydrographic offices;
- To study any matters relating to hydrography and the allied sciences and techniques and to collect the necessary papers;
- To further the exchange of nautical charts and documents between hydrographic offices of member Governments;
- To circulate the appropriate documents;
- To give guidance and advice upon request, in particular to countries engaged in setting up or expanding their hydrographic service;
- To encourage coordination of hydrographic surveys with relevant oceanographic activities;
- To extend and facilitate the application of oceanographic knowledge for the benefit of navigators;
- To cooperate with international organizations and scientific institutions which have related objectives.

The International Hydrographic Organization also has a Finance Committee, which monitors the financial management. It meets during the sessions of the Conference.

The Organization has juridical personality. In the territory of each of its members it enjoys, subject to agreement with the member Government concerned, such privileges and immunities as may be necessary for the exercise of its functions and the pursuit of its objectives.

The regular expenses of the Organization are met from the ordinary annual contributions of member Governments in accordance with a scale based on the tonnage of their fleets. Donations, requests, subventions and other funds may be accepted subject to the approval of the Finance Committee.

Technical assistance and capacity-building

A recognized source of guidance in all matters relating to hydrography and nautical cartography, the Organization often acts as a coordinating body for the promotion of projects to establish or strengthen the hydrographic capabilities of developing countries.

It routinely encourages the conclusion of bilateral and multilateral technical assistance agreements while endeavouring to establish even closer relations with the international finance institutions. Advisory visits are arranged in any country that requests them, especially if it is in the developing world.

The Organization encourages the creation of fellowships for hydrographers and nautical cartographers, such as those given by the Japan International Cooperation Agency or by the hydrographic offices of the United States of America, India, France, Spain, Chile, Italy, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Russian Federation.

The Organization has concluded an agreement with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Maritime Academy of Trieste (Italy) in order to coordinate the training of hydrographers from developing countries.

Publications

The Bureau ensures the dissemination of more than 40 publications, of which the most important are:

- *National Maritime Policies and Hydrographic Services*;
- *Resolutions of the International Hydrographic Organization*;
- *Standards of Competence for Hydrographic Surveyors* (adopted by all training institutions);
- *Chart Specifications* (adopted by the governmental hydrographic offices);
- *IHO Standards for Hydrographic Surveys* (adopted by governmental hydrographic offices);
- Standards for electronic navigational charts (highly complex standards adopted by IMO);
- Standards for the dissemination of information on maritime safety (in cooperation with IMO);
- *Limits of Oceans and Seas* (a new edition of this complex publication is now being prepared and is an essential tool for cartographers);
- *Manual on Technical Aspects of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*;
- *General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans*, and international bathymetric charts (in cooperation with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). This work, initiated by Prince Albert I of Monaco in 1903, is extremely useful for scientific research and for management of the seabed and coastal zone;
- *Gazetteer of Geographical Names of Undersea Features*;
- *International Hydrographic Bulletin*, a monthly publication which deals with topical subjects of worldwide interest;
- *IHO Yearbook*, listing addresses and references for all the hydrographic offices of member States and non-member States, together with details of their personnel and vessels.

The International Hydrographic Organization has a web site for the use of members States and the public: www.iho.shom.fr.

Reasons for requesting observer status in the General Assembly of the United Nations

At the invitation of the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, the Legal Counsel, the International Hydrographic Organization has been associated on a regular basis with the work carried out at meetings of the States parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. It has also participated in the open-ended informal consultative process which the General Assembly established by its resolution 54/33 in order to facilitate its annual review of developments in ocean affairs.

Observer status, by allowing the Organization to participate in the sessions of the General Assembly, will enable it to work more closely with the programmes and institutions of the United Nations system with a view to increasing cooperation and coordination in various marine science activities and to develop its training and capacity-building activities in the areas described above.

Annex II

Draft resolution

Observer status for the International Hydrographic Organization in the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Wishing to promote cooperation between the United Nations and the International Hydrographic Organization,

1. *Decides* to invite the International Hydrographic Organization to participate in its sessions and its work in the capacity of observer;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the present resolution.